



WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. of L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS

801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.

FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

No. 26.

FIGHT FOR RECOGNITION RENEWED

Machinists in Convention Declare for Strike in Support of Demands of Federation of Shop Employees.

Washington, Sept. 30.—The delegates attending the convention of the International Association of Machinists in session at Davenport adopted resolutions declaring for a strike on the Harriman railroads unless the demands of the Federation of shop employees are recognized.

The action was taken after a conference of the international presidents of organizations whose members will be affected by the controversy. At this meeting President Franklin of the Brotherhood of Boilermakers & Iron Ship Builders of America; President Ryan of the International Association of Car Workers; President Oline of the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and President Sullivan of the Amalgamated Alliance of Sheet Metal Workers all declared in favor of a strike to compel the railroad companies to recognize the Shop Federation and its demands. President O'Connell of the International Association of Machinists dissenting.

Immediately after the action of the convention had been announced President Kline of the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and helpers left for Chicago, where, it was said an attempt might be made to bring about a renewal of the negotiations with the officials of the railroads. Every honorable attempt will be made to avoid a conflict with the railroads, but the rank and file of the different organizations appear determined to enforce the demands made upon the company.

Strike votes have already been taken by all of the organizations that will be effected and it clearly indicates that the men are ready to strike, if necessary. Many thousands of men will be effected, every one of them skilled workmen, whose places it will be hard to fill.

JOHN J. McNAMARA RE-ELECTED

Washington, Sept. 30.—Positive of his innocence and sure of his acquittal the International Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' Union in convention at Milwaukee, Wis. have re-elected John J. McNamara as general secretary-treasurer of the organization.

SENATOR LA FOLLETTE'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Which Shall Rule - Wealth or Man? Which Shall Lead - Money or Intellect?

Washington, Sept. 30.—The September issue of the American Magazine will contain Chapter 1 of Senator La Follette's autobiography. The first chapter deals with his political experiences in fighting machine rule in Wisconsin. The Senator states in the introduction that the autobiography is written for the express purpose of "exhibiting the struggle for a more representative government, which is going forward in this country." He quotes a part of a speech he heard Chief Justice Ryan of Wisconsin make to the graduating class at Madison in June, 1873, reciting the danger that he believed would result from great combinations of capital. Chief Justice Ryan, with prophetic vision, said: "There is looming up a new and dark power. I cannot dwell upon the signs and shocking omens of its advent. The accumulation of individual wealth seems to be greater than it ever has been since the downfall of the Roman Empire. The enterprises of the country are aggregating vast corporate combinations of unexampled capital, boding marching, not for economic conquests only, but for political power. For the first time really in our politics money is taking the field as an organized power. . . . Already, here at home, one great corporation has trifled with the sovereign power, and insulted the state. There is great fear that it, and its great rival, have confederated to make partition of the state and share it as spoils. . . . The question will arise, and arise in your day, though perhaps not fully in mine, 'Which shall rule—wealth or man; which shall lead—money or intellect; who shall fill public stations—educated and patriotic free men, or the feudal selfs of corporate capital?'"

READY FOR BUSINESS

Washington, Sept. 30.—Through the efforts of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor many excellent laws have become operative in the commonwealth. This year it proposes to outdo its efforts in the past and the Legislative Committee has been instructed to begin at once a campaign for the repeal of the insurance clause of the new compensation act; for the establishment of a State Department of labor and for the enactment of the anti-injunction bill, the picketing bill, the Initiative and Referendum bill, the public opinion bill, the barbers' license bill, the equal suffrage bill, and the bill providing that women shall not serve liquor in places where the sale of liquor is the principal business.

PORT SALT LAKE

Washington, Sept. 30.—Officials of the Salt Lake Railroad are evidently preparing for trouble, at least they have enclosed their s.c.p.s at Los Angeles with a fence that would have been a fine protection against Indians in the days when the "noble red men" went on a rampage. The following is from the Los Angeles Citizen: "The Salt Lake Railroad company has enclosed its property with a board fence. The fence extends from first street south to Seventh. In order to make it as formidable looking as possible three strands of barbed wire have been placed on top of the fence. These wires have been fastened to standards which project from the outside at an angle of forty-five degrees." The fence and the barbed wires will never win a victory for the railroad company. Right will conquer fence or no fence.

EVILS OF LEASE SYSTEM

Governor of Arkansas Says: "None but State Should Get Profit From Convict Labor."

Washington, Sept. 30.—That there is something wrong with the present system of convict labor is apparent, when prominent men like Governor W. Donaghey of Arkansas has this to say:

"The management of the Arkansas penitentiary has been a perplexing problem to the people of the state for many years. The penitentiary is designedly a place for the punishment of criminals, and should not be made a football for politicians to toss here and there, nor a means of personal profit to individuals, corporations or contractors. Every phase of monetary profit coming from convict labor to anyone except the state should be eliminated. This can never be done under any form of leasing convicts to contractors. Under the best system of management for penal institutions, the men directly in charge of convicts become negligent of the proper protection of the convicts against a bad treatment. But when a convict is hired out and with the thought uppermost in the mind of the guard or warden that the convict is in the penitentiary to be punished, it is not difficult for a contractor, having nothing at stake but the money he is to make in the transaction, to influence the protectors of the State's interests to become more neglectful of the welfare of the helpless criminals in their charge. As an instance of adverse conditions under the lease system, I will make the prediction that an investigation of the facts would show that the deaths of a large majority of the convicts for the past two years have occurred in cases where they were, or had been hired out to contractors. I will also venture the statement that escapes are made from the same camps in about the same ratio as these deaths occur. Any form of the lease system also promotes disorganization of the State's interests and discontent in the minds of the convicts. When the state works her own convicts directly on her own work and on her own premises, there is no incentive to overwork, underfeed or badly clothe the prisoners. I was told by the warden on the State's farm that during the past year, on a certain occasion, he sent eighteen convicts two miles away from headquarters without a guard, to clear some land. That they went to and from work daily without giving the least trouble. Then, as a matter of actual experience, we find the expense of maintenance to be materially less when working the convicts directly for the state. On our convict farm if there had been a free guard employed in the past two years, it was a useless expense. During my several visits there, I have never seen one, and the statement of the warden to me was that there were no free guards on the farm. All were convicts and those I noticed were mostly cripples or otherwise disabled so they could not have made full hands at other kinds of labor. But when convicts are hired out to contractors it not only takes free guards, but also more of them to a given number of men than it would require on the farm."

FREE SHOPS

Washington, Sept. 30.—In Atlanta, Ga. there has been an awakening among the members of the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America. The men are making a strong effort to better their conditions and begin a campaign on October 8 by demanding that every firm shall provide a free shop. The union will also see to it that all members of the organization shall work in these shops.

THEY DIE YOUNG

Brass Foundrymen Rarely Reach Age of Fifty and Are Declared Incompetent At Forty.

Washington, Sept. 30.—The battle of the trades unions for the eight hour day and better shop conditions is surely justified. Writing in the Survey Dr. Emory Hayhurst has this to say: "The age statistics are really startling. Out of 1,751 brass foundrymen only seventeen over fifty years of age were found, and a bare 260 over forty years of age. When asked the cause of this, officials invariably stated: "They get too old, they can't turn out the work they should every day." But what sort of an industry is this in which nearly six-sevenths of its followers are old at the age of forty? Workmen claim they "are knocked out by the brass fumes". These age statistics from Chicago workmen are no different from those Sir Thomas Oliver gives in his book of Dangerous Trades: "Only ten brass workers of 1,200 casters in Birmingham, England were found living beyond sixty years. A superannuation insurance for brass founders to begin at fifty-five years of age had only three applicants in a period of some ten years."

"The present rate of mortality of the brass foundryman is two and one half times that of the farmer. Respiratory diseases, particularly consumption, account for the difference. Comparative tables based on sickness and invalidism, if obtainable, would show even greater differences."

STILL FIGHTING

Washington, Sept. 30.—Members of Shirt Makers' Local Union No. 232 of the United Garment Workers of New York City have been on strike for fourteen weeks and are still on the firing line determined to win their battle for better conditions. There have been no desertions and the strikers are confident that their demands will soon be conceded.

RENTPAYERS WANT TO STRIKE

Paris, France, Sept. 30.—People who pay rent are now numbered with the multitude who have declared emphatically against the cost of living. An organization has been formed in Paris and its secretary has announced the intention of its members to strike next January. The first move will be a refusal to pay rent in advance. The organization has already 5,000 members and is growing so rapidly that Prime Minister M. Caillaux has already announced the Government's intention of including in next year's Budget certain measures for remedying the evils for the elimination of which the organization has been formed.

STAND BY THE UNION

Brest, France, Sept. 30.—Admiral de Marolles is determined to destroy the union of dock yard hands here, and recently issued an order commanding the workmen to sever their relations with the labor organization. The workmen refused to entertain any such proposition, and hundreds of them who had declined to join the union did so immediately on the issuance of the admiral's order. The union has now replied to the admiral's demand by making a counter demand for an increase in wages of 50 cents a day and the permanent employment of the additional hands who have been engaged in the construction of the new battleship Jean Bart. A strike is now threatened unless the demands are conceded.

A GOOD SHOWING

International Association of Machinists has Remarkable Record for the Years 1909-1911.

Washington, Sept. 30.—According to President O'Connell's report members of the I. A. of M. have been on the firing line 730 days in the past two years. They have engaged in 152 strikes, a majority of which have been won. They are now striking at forty different points for increases in wages, reductions in the hours of labor, and better shop conditions.

In two years the general office has paid in strike benefits the sum of \$585,400.29, while contributions from the local lodges to pay non-beneficial members on strike have probably amounted to as much again.

110 new charters have been issued during the past two years, and today there are few points in the United States and Canada, where machinists are employed; where lodges of the I. A. of M. cannot be found.

Since the last report made, 73 great railroad corporations, and 80 contract concerns have signed agreements with this organization, and its power has been so far-reaching that even Haiti, in Hawaii, has a firmly established local union.

In death benefits it has spent \$93,325.00, and its local unions have paid, on a conservative estimate, \$100,000, for sick benefits.

FOR THE McNAMARA DEFENSE

Washington, Sept. 30.—At the convention of the New York State Federation of Labor \$100 was appropriated for the defense of the McNamara brothers. The delegates also voluntarily contributed a like sum for the same purpose. Resolutions condemning the kidnapping of the McNamaras were also passed.

WILL PROBE TAYLOR SYSTEM

Washington, Sept. 30.—Representative W. B. Wilson, chairman of the House Labor Committee has notified President Gompers and Secretary Morrison of the American Federation of Labor that because of the general demand that the New Taylor System be investigated, the hearings would begin the week of October 4, in the Hotel Touraine, Boston, Mass. Representatives of members of the unions employed in the navy yards and arsenals will be present at the hearing, and they are certain that they will be able to convince the committee that the introduction of the Taylor System would have a demoralizing effect on all government work.

IN RECORD TIME

Washington, Sept. 30.—It took 1,500 members of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees less than a day to bring the United Railway Company at Detroit, Mich., to time. The men were getting 23, 25 and 28 cents an hour and wanted 25 and 30 cents an hour. The company refused to concede the demands of the union and as a result not a street car ran until the trouble was settled. A settlement was reached inside of 24 hours through arbitration and the men were awarded a scale of 23 cents an hour for the first six months, 27½ cents an hour for the next year and 29½ cents an hour thereafter. The strike was well conducted. There was positively no disorder and not a man was arrested.

A DECIDED VICTORY

Eight Thousand Ladies' Tailors and Dressmakers Strike and Win in New York City.

Washington, Sept. 30.—Standing shoulder to shoulder, with: "The concern of one the concern of all" as their motto, the garment workers of New York have gained another substantial victory. In the past the struggles between the garment workers and their employers have been long and bitterly contested. Now the garment workers are united and the struggles are growing fewer and of much shorter duration. The strike recently ended, lasted less than a week and the strikers have practically gained every one of their chief demands.

The demands of the union most strenuously opposed by the employers, and firmly demanded by the strikers follow: The union shop; the abolition of piece work; a fifty-four hour week; half holiday on Saturday; tailors to be paid not less than \$24; male helpers, \$18; female helpers \$16; a fixed pay day and payment to be made in cash; no home work and no Sunday work; no overtime after 8:30 p. m.; union is accorded privilege of having shop delegate and union delegate who are to have access to the shops at all times; equal division of work during the dull season, the establishment of a board of grievances; a joint board of sanitary control and a permanent board of arbitration.

An agreement covering all the above points has been entered into between the Merchants' Society of Ladies' Tailors and Dressmakers of New York and Local No. 38 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Some of the smaller employers are still holding out, but their shops are picketed and the determination of the workers to win is so evident that they are yielding one by one. The victory of the ladies' and dressmakers will be complete in a few days.

SOME SPLENDID RESULTS

The Wages of an Army of Workers Has Been Increased Through the Efforts of the Union.

Washington, Sept. 30.—President Mahon in his annual report to the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America shows that the union has accomplished great things for its members during the past year. Speaking on wage increases he had this to say: "During the term there has not been a single reduction of wages anywhere; while upon the other hand 138 divisions have received increases in wages varying from one-half cent to ten cents an hour, and twenty of these divisions have had the second increase during the term. The wage increase affects 42,491 of our members and amounts annually to \$2,356,900. The average per member for the year is \$55.46.

"In addition to the increases that have been secured by our established divisions, in the attempt to organize unorganized cities, due to our agitation there has been given a number of wage increases, called by the companies voluntary increases. These increases however, were made in an effort to prevent the organization of the workers. It has been impossible to secure accurate accounts of all these increases, but we have been able to figure on several of them and find that the wages of unorganized men have been increased \$244,000 a year through the efforts of our organization."

The report also shows that the hours of labor have been reduced in many cities and that obnoxious conditions have been eliminated through the efforts of members of the union.

A LAND OF PROMISE

Government of New Zealand Assists Workers to Buy Dwellings on Very Easy Terms.

Washington, Sept. 30.—The following from the Daily Consular and Trade Reports will show how the Government of New Zealand legislates for the toilers: "In accordance with an act passed in December, 1910, the Government of New Zealand is now putting into operation a plan for the sale to workmen, in cash installments, of dwellings especially suitable to their use.

"The act makes some important changes in a former workers' dwelling act passed in 1905, which it repeals, chiefly by doing away with the tenancy and lease methods of disposing of houses and substituting sales on very easy terms, including an initial deposit of \$48.66, with subsequent installments of \$17.03 every half year (payable weekly, fortnightly or monthly), for a period of 25½ years, on every \$486.65 owing at the commencement of the purchase. Of this amount 5 per cent is charged for interest on the sum owing from time to time, computed half yearly; the balance of the installment goes to pay the principal; so that the amount of interest payable diminishes from the first half year onward, while the amount paid upon the principle correspondingly increases. Thus in the event of a dwelling being erected the capital value of which, including land etc., is say \$2,725.24, the amount owing just after the payment of the original deposit of \$48.66 would be \$2,676.58.

"A special arrangement has been made with the Government life insurance department by which a purchaser of a workers dwelling may, on entering into his agreement to purchase, effect with that department an insurance on his life throughout the period of his agreement for, as nearly as practicable, the amount owing on his dwelling from time to time, so that in the event of the death of the purchaser the balance owing on his dwelling would at once be payable by the life insurance department, and the dwelling would become part of his estate."

ANOTHER RAILROAD SLAUGHTER

Ground Covered With Mutilated Corpses, Sacrifices to the Greed and Carelessness of a Railroad.

Washington, Sept. 30.—Death still reaps an abundant harvest on the railroads. Sixteen human beings dead and ground to atoms, and five mangled and torn although still alive tell another tale of wanton and criminal carelessness on the part of the railroads.

It proved a sad ending for a night of merriment on the part of 31 light hearted human beings who had attended a wedding in the country and were returning home on a hayrack. Sixteen of them never saw home again and five more will in all probability be crippled for life.

The slaughter took place at the Commercial street crossing at Neenah, Wis. when train No. 121, northbound, dashed through the load of unfortunates hurling sixteen of them into eternity without a moment for preparation. The ground was strewn with armless, legless and headless bodies, and some of the bodies were so badly mutilated that identification was possible only through fragments of clothing. There was hardly a sliver left of the hayrick.

The train was 30 minutes late and running 60 miles an hour over a crossing. Nearly a score of other lives have been lost at the same place on different occasions, but still the work of devastation goes on. The Labor Movement has yet much to accomplish in its work seeking to compel railroad corporations to have some regard for human life.

SAY GAS CAUSED EXPLOSION

Relatives of Harvey Elder, Killed in Explosion in Los Angeles Times Building Sues Otis.

Washington, Sept. 30.—General Harrison Gray Otis, the union hater, who has tried to fasten the crime of blowing up the Times Building on organized labor will now have to strive to keep the crime from being fastened on himself. Relatives of some of the workmen who lost their lives in the explosion have awakened to the realization of the fact that the General and not the union is responsible for the death of their loved ones. The following dispatch from Los Angeles appeared in the Washington Star: "Suit for \$50,000 damages has been brought against the Los Angeles Times by the widow and mother of A. Churchill Harvey Elder, who died as a result of the disaster at the plant of that newspaper, October 1, 1910.

"The suit was directed against Harrison Gray Otis, president and general manager of the Times; Harry Oandleer, treasurer and assistant manager, and Harry E. Andrews, managing editor.

"The plaintiffs allege that the explosion in the Times Building was caused by gas. They charge the defendants with having negligently permitted the establishment to become filled with gas and with having failed to provide proper means of escape from the building in accordance with city ordinances.

"Elder was assistant city editor of the Times, when the explosion occurred he jumped from the third story window and was so severely injured that he died."

THE MEDIUM

Mr. Frank Munsey a Great Publisher Declares Readjustment of Wage Scales Must Come Through Unions.

Washington, Sept. 30.—While in London, England Mr. Frank Munsey was interviewed by a representative of the Evening Standard and the St. James Gazette regarding the situation in the labor world. The statement of Mr. Munsey is an endorsement of organized labor and is reproduced in part: "This reformation that is going on is vividly manifest in every phase of endeavor in the thought world, the educational world, and even the religious world. Everything everywhere is being reformed on new lines, new theories and new conclusions. We can never settle the labor problem before getting into it. We have got to go through with it and prices of labor must of necessity be adjusted to meet the higher cost and better conditions of living to-day.

"The old standards of living are not only yielding to better standards in the upper levels of life, but in the various levels below as well. This readjustment of the wage scale of labor can only be brought about by labor unions, and while the latter will in the very nature of the case make mistakes, and in the flush of victory and power go too far, yet the result in the end will be an uplifting of labor and the general citizenship of the nation. The standards worth while in a nation are the standards of the average citizenship, not the standards of the few.

"To my mind the best citizen, the best patriot, is the man who makes himself a part of progress that he may influence it in the right direction, rather than the man who concedes nothing and stands to the bitter end for what has been. There is no standing still in any phase of life, and this is as true of nations as of anything else. It is either progress, retrogression or death."

The People by Constitutional Right Make Laws, the Courts, Without Constitutional Right Destroy Them.

Washington, Sept. 30.—In an editorial note Pearson's Magazine for September has this to say of the courts:

"It may be put down as a fact that the majority of the people is not satisfied with the brand of justice that our courts are handing out. The majority understands only the results of decisions. And with the results much the greater part of the people are dissatisfied. They are particularly dissatisfied with those decisions which have annulled the people's will. That's just what the courts do. The people, by constitutional right, assemble and make the laws which they want. The courts, if they please, without constitutional right destroy those laws. The constitution which the judges in their decision appear to hold sacred does not give the judges the right to kill legislation. They are simply taking the right. Holding the Constitution as a sacred and inviolate instrument when it concerns other people — and some folks think stretching a point when it concerns a few people — they forget that it does not give them the right to do some of the things they do. How about that? The courts must be the bulwark of the nation, and not the "bulwark of privilege," as they have been called. They cannot be the nation's mainstay when their decisions on public matters displease the great mass of the people. And when some of those decisions are based on an usurped power you must begin to think about it."

A WELL DESERVED VICTORY

Washington, Sept. 30.—In Los Angeles, the "Open Shop City" the abiding place of General Otis and the stronghold of the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association organized labor has scored a decided and well deserved victory. Eight years ago the firm of Charles Levy and Sons, spurred by the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association, locked out its union tailors. During the eight years the union men have never ceased in their efforts to unionize this shop, and they have had to fight General Otis and the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association every hour of the day, every day of the week, every week of the month, and every month of the year. They are the victors. General Otis and the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association have been routed, and this firm one of the largest and most substantial business houses in the city has deserted the camp of the enemy and signed an agreement with the Journeymen Tailors' Union.

The business men of Los Angeles are awakening to a realization of the fact that it is bad business policy to associate with labor crushers whose chief aim is to compel workmen to labor for starvation wages. Well paid workmen have money to spend and the merchants get it. Poorly paid workmen have little to spend, their employers spend it, mostly outside of the city and the merchants do not get it. The organized labor movement in Los Angeles is going up, The Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association is going down.

SOME GOOD WORK

Washington, Sept. 30.—Representatives of the New Hampshire State Federation of Labor have succeeded in securing some splendid laws from the General Court of 1911. Among them are laws providing for "first aid to the injured cabinets" in workshops and factories, the cash payment of wages, the re-creation of the bureau of labor, employer's liability and workmen's compensation, the regulation of child labor and preventing the defrauding of laborers.

THE LAND OF MORE

President Gompers Carries the Gospel of Organized Labor into the Mohave Desert.

Washington, Sept. 30.—The following excerpt from the address delivered by President Gompers in Bakersfield, Cal. is from the "Morning Echo":

"Unionism", Mr. Gompers declared, "is an organized expression of world-wide discontent, and unrest of the masses under existing conditions. With a country where the fertile soil responds so abundantly to the magic touch of labor; with such a climate — such a series of climates — with 95,000,000 energetic, earnest people; with the wonderful labor saving machinery to increase the efficiency of the workers— wherever, in such a country a man is seeking work and cannot find it, society is unjust and to such a man our boast and claim of civilization is a mockery and a sham.

"To tell us that our condition is better than the condition of our fathers is to beg the question," said Mr. Gompers. "None who has read or knows of the past will deny this, but we claim that the betterment is not commensurate with the greater efficiency and output of the present. We are bound for the land of more. And when we have got more we will ask for still more, and when we get more we will ask for more again. As we see the signs of the times labor is likely to get more. The opponents of organized labor may as well understand that their efforts to crush this movement out will fail. It is written in the heavens that the toilers are coming into their own.

"The labor movement of today is the legitimate heir of the struggle of ages against wrong, against injury, against tyranny, and for justice, right and freedom. Organized labor is the best expression of discontent and the best machinery with which to make that expression felt with the largest amount of permanent good and the least injury to anyone. You cannot make an omelet without breaking some eggs. No move can bring great benefits to the masses without bringing some injury to the few. But the unions hurt only the gradgrind employers," the speaker declared. "To the fair employers, the employers who are willing to pay living wages, the unions are a protection against the unfair and destructive competition of the gradgrinds."

"In everything except labor," Mr. Gompers said, "none question the right of the man who has something to sell to set the price. The working man has his labor to sell, and the union would enable him to set the price on his labor. The employer wants to set the price and we are urged to exercise the grace of submission and trust to the hope and assurance of a reward in the sweet bye and bye. We are not going to surrender any of our hope of reward in the sweet bye and bye, but we want to get used to a good time here and now.

"You can measure the progress of a country by the progress of its labor organizations. The same is true of a city. I know the struggles that the unions have gone through in Bakersfield, and I am glad to know that there is a better feeling here between employers and employees. They thought once that they had the labor spirit crushed, but they had another guess. They understand labor organizations better now, — all except one, and he is coming across. That house will be a union house and it will not be very long in the future."